



BMCW BUZZ

On January 1, 1998, the Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare opened its doors to children and families. Since that time, the BMCW has been continuously improving its services to children and families through its many public-private partnerships.

The history of the BMCW and its progress over the past years are available on the BMCW web site.

Plans for celebrating the 10 year milestone are underway. Look for announcements about upcoming events.

10 YEARS

1998-2008

PARTNERS WITH THE COMMUNITY



*Protecting Children
Strengthening Families
Building Communities*



Implementation of Safety Plan Begins

The Department of Health and Family Services' mission is to protect and promote the health and safety of the people of Wisconsin. On September 21, 2007, Secretary Kevin R. Hayden presented the Milwaukee Child Welfare Safety Plan, which helps ensure the safety of the children being served by BMCW.

The Safety Plan is now in full swing. Workgroups have been formed and are meeting. All goals of the Safety Plan are being tracked in a project management work plan. Both the workgroup list and the project work plan are available on the BMCW web site under *New Initiatives*.

All program staff attended orientation sessions for the Safety Plan given by Amy Smith, Denise Revels Robinson, and Suzanne Zipperer. This provided an opportunity to review the plan goal by goal and see how it ensures child safety throughout every program area.

Updates on several items of the plan include:

IA Training Teams and Mentors: A training team model similar to one implemented in the Ongoing Case Management program will

be created for state employed staff in Initial Assessment, including the Crisis Response Team. The training team supervisor positions have been approved and recruiting will begin by the end of January. The IA mentor positions are in the approval process.

Expanded role for the Milwaukee Child Welfare Partnership Council: Under federal guidelines, child protective service agencies must have a citizen review panel that reviews child fatalities that occur on open cases. The Partnership Council will take this role following changes to its bylaws and approval from the Bureau of Programs and Policies.

Expand capacity of the medical director: The job description for a medical liaison position has been finalized and recruitment will begin soon for a professional who will assist the medical director with staffing the needs of medically needy children under the care of the BMCW.

Improve out-of-home care services: Ongoing case managers work with families to

From the Director

I am pleased to wish you all a happy new year as we move into 2008, the 10th anniversary year of the BMCW.



During 2008, we will highlight the progress made in achieving the safety, permanency, and well-being for all children we serve in Milwaukee County. Two events will be planned; one a gathering of all staff across program areas to network and recognize that we are, as we so often say, "one bureau." The other will invite leaders in the community to learn about the progress we have made. You will hear more about these as plans move forward.

Celebrating ten years and recognizing the progress we have made does not, of course, mean that we are now able to rest. As we continue to implement the Milwaukee Child Welfare Safety Plan, we anticipate improved practice, services, and outcomes, particularly in the Initial Assessment (IA) program. Many of the ideas IA staff submitted to the Workforce Steering Committee in January 2007 are included in the Safety Plan, including the creation of training teams and mentors for IA staff as are provided to the Ongoing Case Management program.

As the Safety Plan moves forward, please feel free to contact any of the workgroup leaders with questions and concerns. You will find them listed on the BMCW web site, along with regular updates on the Safety Plan.

The Workforce Retention Steering Committee is now in its final stage of making recommendations. I want to recognize all the hard work this group did in reviewing all 174 ideas staff submitted. I hope that others will consider volunteering on the implementation workgroups for these efforts as they move forward.

Denise Revels Robinson

Safety Plan

Continued from page 1.

identify relatives who may be able to care for children. They assess relative caregivers before a child is placed with them to ensure the relative is willing and able to provide for the specific needs of the child and to identify support the relative needs to maintain the child in care. Relative caregivers will be invited to focus groups to help BMCW determine what other support can be provided.

BMCW has also been working with the Bureau of Regulation and Licensing around the issue of standards for both group homes and treatment foster homes. BMCW's expectations of group homes goes beyond the regulatory requirements to include additional services and programming for youth in care. Management is also working with agencies who license treatment foster homes to reduce the maltreatment of children in treatment homes and ensure all homes are safe and prepared to care for the specific needs of the children they serve.

Train Access and Initial Assessment staff on state standards:

This training took place in December. Over the next few months, a technical support plan will be implemented to support the transfer of learning and to ensure that the training is applied to practice.

Create child safety scorecard: Data collection for scorecard items has been identified. The proposed scorecard will be presented to the Milwaukee Child Welfare Partnership Council for its review.

In addition, language will be incorporated into contracts for private partner agencies that will reinforce the responsibility of all service providers to ensure the safety of children during all aspects of service.

These are a few of the 21 goals of the Safety Plan. More information about the Milwaukee Child Welfare Safety Plan is available on the BMCW web site at <http://dhfs.wisconsin.gov/bmcw/progserv/Initiatives/SafetyPlan.HTM>



CFCP Families Celebrate Holiday

On December 18, 2007, Children's Family and Community Partnerships staff at the 1730 W. North Ave. location held the second annual Holiday Party for Children. The Holiday Party gives reunified families, caregivers with limited income, sibling groups, and family friends the chance to experience a little extra holiday kindness.

Children received a gift specifically requested by the child and purchased by sponsors. Sponsors donated 275 gifts in 2007. Because of the size of the event, CFCP partnered with the North Central YMCA to use their beautiful new facility at 1350 W. North Avenue.

With the help of the dedicated Holiday Party Committee, community partners, supporters, and volunteers, the party was a success.

Staff Retention Workgroups Make Recommendations

Update on Phase 2 of the Workforce Retention Initiative

On January 19, 2007, BMCW held an all-staff meeting to discuss the progress on workforce retention efforts following a study by Steven McMurtry and Susan Rose of the Helen Bader School of Social Welfare and other researchers from the Child Welfare League of America and the University of Chicago. This meeting reviewed the efforts of Phase 1 of the Workforce Retention Steering Committee and its workgroups to implement recommendations from the study. Staff were also asked to write suggestions for Phase 2 of the initiative.

The steering committee took the suggestions from staff and divided them among four workgroups. The workgroups then went through all 174 suggestions to determine if it is already being worked on by an existing committee, if there would be something preventing implementation of the idea (such as state CPS standards), or if it was an idea that could be put forward. Additional suggestions related to working conditions were given to the management of BMCW and the private partner agencies. These ideas must be addressed by management of each agency.

The following suggestions will move forward to the BMCW and CEO management for their approval. Following internal approval, a briefing will be provided to the Milwaukee Child Welfare Partnership Council Executive Committee:

Environment and Ethos – Linda Knors and Mary Kennedy, chairpersons

- Have a BMCW-wide cook-off to fund a night out at a Brewer's game.
- Train interested staff to become peer counselors.

Policy, Procedures, and Process – Christi Nonn and Angela Gunn, chairpersons

- Streamline the process for using BMCW and private agency legal counsel.
- Have a "point person" at the administrative office to recruit members to various workgroups.
- Change policy to require all IA supervisors to review initial assessments within 48 hours of



completion by the IA social worker and close them within 72 hours.

- Give Safety Service case managers the option of having the second CST 60 days from the initial 7-day family meeting instead of 30 days if approved by their supervisor, to allow families time to make changes.
- Refine the process of transfer from IA to Ongoing.
- Clarify the role of IA and Ongoing in detention of children already in care.
- Provide clerical support for the CST process.
- Create specialized units in Ongoing Case Management, such as staff specialized in children enrolled in Wraparound.
- Allow the transfer of cases when a case manager feels she or he is no longer effective with a family.
- Refine the case assignment process in Ongoing.

Technology—April Behounek and Elizabeth Torres, chairpersons

- Provide all frontline assignment staff with PC Tablets
- All private partner agencies make provisions to have/hire vans for moving families and belongings and to use for long distance trips.
- An internal BMCW work-web be created to post information about work groups and other BMCW initiatives.

Family Intervention – Amy Friesema and Tanya Bitter, chairpersons

- Identify a liaison in Family Court to assist in getting information about custody orders.
- Allow the FISS program to receive a referral letter from IA for services prior to their report being closed with IA, if there are no imminent safety concerns.

Please see page 8.

Everyone has a Role in Recruiting Families

By Jessie Nelson, Quality Development Program Manager, Children's Service Society of Wisconsin

The CSSW recruitment program has developed a comprehensive recruitment plan and is committed to the cultivation of more placement options for children in out-of-home care. Our recruitment activities are focused on a number of target populations, which include the African American community, the Hispanic/Spanish-speaking community, the LGBT community, the faith community, and the business community. The primary goals are:

- To raise awareness regarding the need.
- To break down myths about foster care and/or adoption.
- To call people to action.

The recruitment team uses a variety of methods to achieve our goals, including presentations to organizations, booths at fairs and festivals, literature drops, direct mailings, relationships with professional organizations (Children's Hospital, Milwaukee Public Schools) and radio and print advertising.

CSSW's recruitment efforts are augmented by the foster/adoptive parent ambassador program. The ambassadors are 20 foster/adoptive parents who have a positive experience to share. They assist in the development of opportunities to speak with organizations and take part in events. They provide a real-life perspective that assists in engaging potential parents.

The greatest recruitment tool, however, is the voice of others. Each month more than 40% of callers say that they heard about CSSW or foster care/adoption from a friend, relative, neighbor, or co-worker. When people speak positively about their experience as a foster/adoptive parent, they motivate others to make a difference in the life of a child as well.

Keep in mind, that as BMCW staff, we are all foster and adoptive family recruiters in our circle of friends, family, and acquaintances. We can continually mention the need for foster and adoptive homes to people we think would be good candidates. The recruitment team is open to ideas and suggestions from all of our partner agencies.

The greatest recruitment tool that we have is the voice of others. Over 40% of the callers each month say that they heard about CSSW or foster care/adoption from a friend, . . .

Businesses Asked to Hire Foster Youth

By Karie Lowe, Independent Living Coordinator, Lad Lake

There are about 200 youth aging out of the foster care system every year in Milwaukee. They are often faced with many challenges and need support to help them transition to life as adults.

The National Family Week Partnership held a breakfast to rally support for such youth by encouraging local businesses to hire them. DHFS Secretary Kevin Hayden welcomed those in attendance, which included BMCW management. The event was held at Marquette University Alumni Memorial Union on November 19, 2007.

Alonzo, a 17-year old who is currently finishing high school, described growing up in foster care and the challenges he and his peers face. He listed his biggest challenge as finding a job so he could earn enough to fund a college education.

Skip Robinson, Director of Community Relations and Player Development for the Milwaukee Bucks, was the keynote speaker. He saluted Alonzo and recounted his own experiences growing up in a foster care setting.

Robinson stressed to the business and community leaders attending the event that foster youth have had to work hard all their lives and are just looking for a chance to prove themselves to the world. He added that they often become the people whose faces appear on Employee of the Month awards at the businesses that give them a chance.

Twenty businesses sent representatives to hear the message of the day and provide support. Among them were Arise, Ball-n-Biscuit Catering, Lakeside Manufacturing Inc. M&I Bank, Northwestern Mutual, and Wheaton Franciscan Health Care.

The National Family Week Partnership is made up of organizations including Adoption Resources of Wisconsin, the Alliance for Children and Families, Aurora Family Service, The Counseling Center of Milwaukee, Lad Lake, My Home Your Home, the Social Development Commission, St. Aemilian-Lakeside, St. Charles Youth and Family Services, and St. Rose Youth and Family Center.

Co-location of BMCW and Sensitive Crimes Reduces Trauma and Helps Families Connect to Services

In February 2007, BMCW Initial Assessment Social Worker Rebecca McFadden and Milwaukee Police Department Sensitive Crimes Officer Karla Lehmann began working on a new endeavor, the Co-location Pilot Project, supported by the BMCW, the Milwaukee Police Department, the Child Protection Center (CPC) and the member agencies of the Child Abuse Review Team (CART).

Ms. McFadden and Officer Lehmann are housed at the Child Protection Center. The teammates work together at the CPC's medical facility, conducting videotaped forensic interviews of abuse victims, participating in joint investigations, and sharing findings with the medical team. They remain employed by their respective organizations.

The pilot program's goals include reducing child trauma in a child-friendly setting; promoting child safety; providing information to the District Attorney's office as needed; and connecting families to mental health services through the CPC and/or the Task Force on Family Violence.

One year into the Co-location Pilot Project, Rebecca and Karla are pleased to report that cases run smoothly when parties collaborate and share knowledge. "Each entity that makes up the child abuse response team provides its own piece of the puzzle – the BMCW, for example, completes the family and child safety assessment portion – and we each strive to remember the unique perspective that other service providers bring along with their findings," said Rebecca. The new approach is often challenging, but also hugely rewarding. As the team sees it, favorable outcomes in the investigation are a direct result of the more comprehensive information provided to criminal and CHIPS district attorneys in Milwaukee County via the co-location.



Another benefit for colleagues who work together at the CPC site is improved skill sets as a result of knowledge sharing. "I have learned so much from watching Karla do interviews. She has conducted forensic interview training, and her

Please see page 8.

La Causa's Ongoing Staff Gets Festive



The La Causa Morale Committee organized a holiday party for its Ongoing Services staff on November 30, 2007 at Mocht Restaurant. Approximately 60 staff attended this event, which included an array of Serbian hors d'oeuvres. The organizers would like to thank all those who attended the event and look forward to many more opportunities to mingle.

BMCW Employees Inducted Into Alpha Delta Mu Honor Society

On November 4, 2007, OCM Mentor Sandra R. Crafton, Region 1; OCMs Kathryn M. Francher and Amy Welch, Region 3; OCM Sarah J. Jungwirth, Region 1; Permanency Consultant Madeline Payton, CSSW; Intake/IA social worker Alauna D. Ruble, BMCW; and Independent Investigator Kathleen Wolfram, CIP, were inducted into Alpha Delta Mu, the Helen Bader School of Social Welfare Honor Society. Initiates attended a brunch in the Wisconsin Room at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Student Union.

The program featured Deborah L. Padgett, Ph.D. Chair, Department of Social Work who greeted and made introductions to initiates; Susan J. Rose, Ph.D. Associate Professor who spoke about the program; and guest speaker Michael Fendrich, Ph.D., Director for Addiction and Behavioral Center, who inspired attendees by advocating for "utter integrity" in social work practice and research and decried "cargo cult" science.

Dr. Fendrich urged initiates to challenge tradition and authority as well as themselves in problem-solving the great issues facing people they will serve and the society in which they will practice. The program culminated in initiates being presented with certificates and pins by Susan J. Rose, Alpha Delta Mu Faculty Advisor David Tucker, and Alpha Delta Mu President and Assistant Professor Marie Savundranayagam, Ph.D.

WELCOME

CFCP Safety Services

Giovanni Davis
Laresha Harris
Patrice McBeath
Cynthia Nation

CFCP OCM

Andrew Bagley
Kelly Bell
Matthew Berauer
Earnest Goggins
Marlys Landsee
Gloria Malone
Jessica Mayne
Darlene Proby
Amy Rodriguez
Cindy Smith
Chee Thao

Mai Yer Vang

CFCP Safety Services

Tysha Chambers
Jeanine Jennings
Demetra Parr-Nelson
Yvette Henderson
Katie Schallhorn
Christina Toon

IA Region 1

Lakeisha Ball
Bruce Christianson
Jeffrey Frey
Nicole Ruiz

IA Region 3

Michelle Horwath
Heather Kohls
Kathryn Palmesano
Lisa Adee

Francisco Salas
Erik Maccoux

La Causa OCM

Maria Alamo
Michael Byrnes
Joell Cantrall
Elizabeth Deanda
Sara Koehler
Michelle Martens
Kate Mewes
Vera Montgomery
Janelle Redmond
Mara Salaam

La Causa Safety Services

Emily Rabe



Happy Birthday

Region 3

Erik Maccoux, 2/20

CFCP Safety Services

Giovanni Davis, 2/17
Darlene Grant, 1/28
Stephanie LaCasse, 1/30
Laresha Harris, 12/13
Charlie Henderson, 2/16
Jami Katarincic, 1/2
Christi Nonn, 2/2

Mary Tuhy, 1/7

Administration

Mary Ann Dykas, 12/5
Khandi Gibson, 1/18
Alauna Ruble, 12/27
Becky Prudhomme, 11/16
Bernita Wright, 12/10

Maximus

Dawn Lewison, 12/9
Vicky Williams, 2/23
Sandra Zbinden, 1/29

FCCP OCM

Oluwatoyin Aderungboye, 3/24
Rosemarie Balistreri, 12/29
Andrea Barlass, 3/11
Toni Bartz, 1/16

April Behounek, 3/13
Kimberly Billingsley, 2/04
John Bradtke, 3/22
Nancy Brook, 12/14
Tricia Burkett, 1/30
Sandra Crafton, 12/12
Jennifer Daniels, 2/21
Charity Douglas, 3/04
Gwen Doyle, 2/21

Elizabeth Garbe, 3/21
Deborah Guillermo, 12/25
Mai Her-Lee, 12/07

Georgia Isaac, 2/13
Ressie Jackson, 12/18
Billie Jo Jester, 1/27

Rebecca Johnson, 2/08
Joan Klug, 12/17

Lisa Maisonneuve, 3/01
Joanne McMillan, 2/02
Jennifer Hastings
Meinholdt, 3/02

Lindsay Mulder, 1/11
Jenni Ojstrsek, 3/06
Brwynn Ostrenga, 2/08
Celestine Patten, 3/27

Chiqueta Patterson, 3/06

Adriana Serwa, 3/08

Sara Waldschmidt, 3/04

Region 2

Nicole Amoroso, 12/02
Lynn Bade, 12/17
Lisa Brierton, 2/03
Annika Green, 2/05
Jennifer Hastings Meinholdt, 3/02

Kristen Halula, 12/20

Liza Herbst, 2/17

Linda Hively, 11/02

Alisha Hunt, 2/15

Lisa Johnson, 3/01

Angela Klump, 1/20

Eman Lee, 3/04

Susanna Leggio, 11/18

Quinn Leisgang, 2/02

John Lowther, 12/01

Megan Paschke, 3/21

Angela Pullam, 12/01

Tawona Reed, 11/21

Kelly Smith, 11/05

Nina Tarantino, 11/29

Nicola Wolfe, 12/07

Nicholas Wood, 12/11

Region 1 IA

Pam Alexander, 1/7

Lakeisha Ball, 3/18

Janet Bennett, 2/10

Jacqueline Espinueva-Xiong, 12/27

Kelly Hirschuber, 3/14

Kimberly Holl, 12/31

Kim Leidl, 3/14

Rebecca McFadden, 1/9

Rashida Moore, 3/28

Tony Roach, 12/01

E. Denise Taylor, 1/15

Linda Thomas, 3/16

La Causa Safety Services

Gennifer Banks, 2/23

Victoria Evans, 2/20

Migdalia Gonzalez, 1/23

Penny McNeal, 12/4

Elizabeth Reinke, 2/11

Marla Seay, 1/14

Elisabeth Steadman, 2/1

Twanna Watson, 2/27

Ashley Wright, 2/12

Erica Wright, 1/30

La Causa-OCM

Maria Alamo, 1/2

Johanna Barkei, 1/21

Dawn Belmontes, 11/6

Joell Cantrall, 12/1

Coral Choinski, 12/19

Michelle Garnette, 11/6

Nancy Gniot, 1/13

Carmen Gutter, 12/27

Melissa Hanke, 2/11

Rebecca Hollister, 2/6

Sara Koehler, 1/9

Darlene Kuhn, 11/23

Angela Maus, 11/28

Maria Rentas-Rodríguez, 11/17

Allison Schaper, 11/11

Joanne Tate-Hayes, 11/27

CSSW

Christine Foy, 12/25

Densie Laine, 12/14

Holly Nelles, 12/21

Judith Ballard, 1/13

Lynn Bushmiller, 1/9

Christie Guertin, 1/13

Robyn Hitchman, 1/17

Merranda Houston, 1/27

Dean Peck, 1/15

Tonia Prather, 1/30

Laura Ruedinger, 1/10

Anna Bluma, 2/21

Marande Buck, 2/22

Jessica Pronold, 2/6

Matthew Steigerwald, 2/22

Angie Trembl, 2/21

Briitta Welch, 2/5

Amy Alba, 3/4

Jennifer Apfel, 3/13

Pam Cotton, 3/6

Alice Elam, 3/30

Kathryn Flansburg, 3/4

Amy Freisema, 3/16

Jay Gaethke, 3/4

Katy Matola, 3/12

Ginny McGowan, 3/28

Sandy Mollberg, 3/13

Madeline Payton, 3/10

Nancy Poull, 3/1

Jamie Socolick, 3/17

Katie Stephens, 3/10

Megan Struve, 3/19

Years on the Team

CFCP Safety Services

Lee Berry, 1 yr.
Darlene Grant, 2 yrs.
Charles Greer, 5 yrs.
Ebenezor Insor, 2 yrs.
Franchesca Langdon, 1 yr.
Patricia Martin, 4 yrs.
Sarah Milling, 5 yrs.
Kenmikiya Terry, 2 yrs.

CFCP OCM

Rosemarie Balistrieri, 5 yrs.
Kristy Baltutis, 5 yrs.
Toni Bartz, 6 yrs.
John Bradtke, 6 yrs.
Sandra Crafton, 7 yrs.
Gay Dukes, 10 yrs.
Jessica Eckert, 2 yrs.
Elizabeth Garbe, 1 yr.
Deborah Guillermo, 3 yrs.
David Hagenson, 6 yrs.
Joan Klug, 10 yrs.
Jumanatu Morray, 10 yrs.
Amanda Schlosser, 3 yrs.
Eric Underly, 6 yrs.
Sara VanCleve, 3 yrs.
Sara Waldschmidt, 6 yrs.

La Cause Safety Services

Glorius Keys, 1 yr.
Keisha Orr, 2 yrs.
Elizabeth Reinke, 1 yr.
Elisabeth Steadman, 2 yrs.
Margaret Thigpen, 5 yrs.

CFCP Clerical Support

Nina Tarantino, 10 yrs.
Jennifer Hastings
Meinholdt, 3 yrs.

CFCP OCM

Nicole Amoroso, 8 yrs.
Tandra Bridges, 3 yrs.
Angela Klump, 3 yrs.
Tamara Rohr, 1 yr.
Aryn Walters, 1 yr.
Sara Woitel, 1 yr.
Nicola Wolfe, 4 yrs.
MayChee Yang, 1 yr.
Dennis Rodriguez, 10 yrs.

Region 1 IA

Pam Alexander, 9 yrs.
Janet Bennett, 5 yrs.
Holly Jones, 3 yrs.
Rashida Moore, 6 yrs.

CSSW

Denise Laine, 12 yrs.
Jennifer Wedward, 7 yrs.
Laura Banaszak, 1 yr.
Denise Franke, 10 yrs.
Wendy Krueger, 8 yrs.
Ronda Moore, 4 yrs.
Holly Nelles, 31 yrs.
Sandy Mollberg, 5 yrs.
Pwana Randall, 2 yrs.
Madeline Payton, 2 yrs.

La Causa, Ongoing

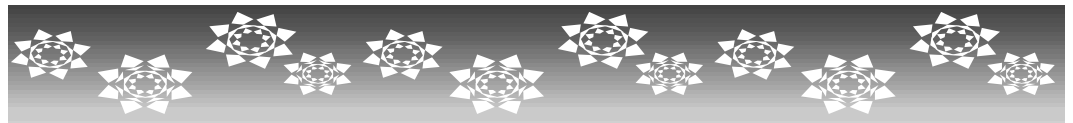
Tamera Brown, 1 yr.
Tracy Clark, 8 yrs.
Sarah Culbertson, 1 yr.
Megan Danielson, 1 yr.
Nancy Gniot, 6 yrs.
Allison Schaper, 2 yrs.
Jennifer Schmeling, 6 yrs.
Kelly Ziegler, 1 yr.



Gina Brown Leading Weight Watchers

After successfully losing more than 80 pounds on Weight Watcher's and maintaining for over a year, Weight Watcher's has hired Maximus Initial Eligibility Specialist Gina Brown as a Weight Watcher's group leader. Gina will be keeping her current position, but will lead an "At Work" lunchtime meeting in a downtown location. Gina is pushing to get a lunchtime Weight Watcher's meeting started at Schlitz Park sometime in the spring.

Congratulations to Christi Nonn, CFCP Safety Services, on her 4th wedding anniversary, November 29, 2007. Christi is expecting her first baby this spring.



Watch out Packers; Bears sign Nick Roach

Nick Roach, 22 year-old son of **IA social worker Tony Roach** has signed with the **Chicago Bears**. Nick played four years at Northwestern University and graduated in June 2007. He went to the San Diego Chargers in July 2007 where he was a free agent and was selected for the practice squad before being signed by the Bears.

Familiar Faces in New Places

Kenmikiya Terry was promoted from Safety Services case manager to Safety Services supervisor for the Region 2 CFCP program.

Lynn Halmar is the new program manager for Ongoing Case Management at La Causa.



Co-location Project at CPC

(Continued from page 5)

knowledge of sexual abuse dynamics has been a big factor in the family comprehending intervention," reported Rebecca. "Karla goes the extra mile to help families understand child disclosure scenarios, case investigations, and case outcomes."

From February through December 2007, Rebecca and Karla conducted more than 75 forensic interviews at the CPC. Working together, they determine if there will be a forensic interview, and who should conduct it, typically taking into account case-specific evidentiary issues and whether or not one of them has already established rapport with the child.

Karla and Rebecca agree that perhaps the best thing about co-location is that the families they serve are less overwhelmed when it comes to navigating the network of services. "Now, with police, medical, and social work teams at one location, more information gathering occurs on the date the child is first seen," Karla said. "The fact that all of the service providers are located in one setting means that families are less confused about what happens next."

As the project reaches its one-year milestone, Rebecca and Karla have been most impressed by the resiliency of families served. "Following the initial date a child is seen at CPC, Children's Hospital Child Psychiatry and their intake team schedule an appointment with a therapist," Rebecca stated. It is a first step along a path that can include referrals to places such as The Counseling Center of Milwaukee for Hand-in-Hand group counseling for sexual assault survivors or its Step 5 outpatient program for youth who have committed a sexual offense.

"The process can be daunting to a family," she adds, "but the protective parent who sees it through reaps its benefits. The courage of the children and families we work with inspires us all."



Statewide Summit for LGBTQ Youth in Out-of-Home Care

By Jane E. Ottow, Children's Service Society of Wisconsin

On September 28, 2007, approximately 60 individuals convened in Portage, to discuss the current status of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning (LGBTQ) youth within Wisconsin's foster care system.

Rudy Estrada, a former Wisconsin GAL, now working in a key advocacy role for LGBTQ youth in New York, was the keynote speaker. Kristy DeWall, a former foster youth, also spoke on behalf of LGBTQ youth who are currently or have aged-out of care. Also on the panel of speakers was a 19-year-old Milwaukee youth who was asked to leave her adoptive home at age 16 after disclosing she was lesbian. Finally, a foster mother from the South Central region of the state was in attendance with her gay adopted son and talked about the process of acceptance and unconditional support for this population of youth.

In preparation for the summit, a statewide survey was dispersed to perceived stakeholders (social workers, administrators, youth workers, mental health providers, teachers, foster parents, and those involved with the children's court system) to gain input about the needs of LGBTQ youth in the child welfare system. More than 300 people responded to the survey. About 49 percent of respondents stated that LGBTQ youth in Wisconsin's child welfare system are underserved and 43.1 percent stated that our child welfare system could do more to serve them. Only 2 percent of respondents expressed the opinion that LGBTQ youth are adequately served at this time.

If you have interest in learning more about this initiative, contact Jane E. Ottow at Children's Service Society of Wisconsin. 414-231-4834 or jane.ottow@cssw.org.

Staff Retention Recommendations

Continued from page 3

- Collect resource guides used throughout the BMCW and share them electronically.
- Have all support staff attend Introduction to BMCW.

Training – Denise Wolodko, liaison to Milwaukee Child Welfare Training Partnership

- Explore the idea of a certification in child welfare at the Bachelor's level.

These recommendations were taken to the CEOs January 23, 2008 for approval. Updates on progress will follow.

What happened to *your* idea? The list of 174 ideas is available from any workgroup chairperson.